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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCE

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State Dept. review completed

Bahr-Kohl in a Holding Pattern

The Bahr-Kohl talks resume today and tomorrow, but Bahr does not expect much to come from these sessions. In a 31 July meeting with the allied chiefs of Mission in Bonn, Bahr said he expected "nothing new" in the general review of basic interests and intended to concentrate on practical improvements. He assumed the FRG cabinet meeting on 9 August would officially empower him to open formal negotiations. They would probably begin on 16 August. This week's meetings thus fall into a lame-duck category.

Both sides have now apparently removed their preconditions to a change of status in the talks. On 28 June Kohl dropped GDR requirements for FRG agreement on exchange of ambassadors and on UN membership for the two German states prior to the start of negotiations. He reiterated GDR interest in proceeding with negotiations on 21 July. Bahr, on 31 July, said that FRG objectives in the negotiations, including the concept of the German nation and four power rights, should be considered as the "desired outcome" rather than a "precondition for" negotiations.

Bahr said he would "like" to complete the negotiations before the beginning of the CSCE preparatory talks in late November, but was uncertain whether this could be achieved. He speculated that the talks could last eight weeks or a year, but emphasized that he did not want to subject the FRG to time pressure by setting a deadline.

Bahr did not discuss whether he expected to achieve eventual agreement on the "special relationship" question but he did raise some questions about the issue of restatement of four power rights, which the Allies require before they will agree to UN membership for the GDR and FRG. He said that neither the East nor West Germans would accept any additional obligations. The American ambassador assured Bahr that this was not and had not been Allied intent. Bahr and the chiefs

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of Mission agreed that the Allied talks with the Soviets concerning a restatement of these rights should proceed in tandem with the Bahr-Kohl talks.

The American ambassador indicated, however, that there was a "problem" with the GDR on this issue. He feared that in the absence of some GDR action indicating acquiescence with the continuation of the quadripartite rights, the GDR might at some future point claim that its entry to the UN wiped out any previous limitations on its sovereignty. Bahr did not think the GDR would associate itself with such a restatement.

Bahr's comments reinforce the impression that prospects for an early conclusion of the talks are not bright. The East Germans are not likely to give in on the "special relationship" issue, and a compromise which would be acceptable to Pankow would probably be harmful to Brandt's election chances. There is also no evidence that the Soviets will force Pankow to compromise in order to reach a quick agreement. A further stumbling block could arise if the West German cabinet refuses to begin talking with the Finns about mutual recognition. This could throw a monkey-wrench into GDR-Finnish talks. Kohl warned on 21 July that "this continued interference by the FRG in the GDR's foreign relations constitutes an extraordinarily severe encumbrance in regard to the (Bahr-Kohl) discussion."

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Trials Continue in Czechoslovakia

Milan Huebl, one time adviser to Dubcek and former party academy head was convicted on 1 August of antistate activities

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and sentenced to 6 1/2 years in prison. The sentence was meted out to the prominent defendant for "preparing, circulating and mailing abroad illegal printed matter" between 1970 and last January. Identically charged were Karel Kyncl, a former TV commentator and New York correspondent for Radio Prague, who received a 20 month sentence, and historian Karel Bartocek, whose 12 month sentence was suspended. The Czechoslovak news agency declared the three men, "wishing to weaken the social and state system in Czechoslovakia, made untruthful statements about conditions in Czechoslovakia and allied countries."

Although Huebl was a member of Dubcek's brain trust and reportedly helped draft the liberalization program that brought on the Soviet invasion, the government charged him specifically with "crimes" allegedly committed after 1968-9. Charges against him are consonant with the recent spate of trials that also have tried defendants not for "crimes" perpetrated during the "Prague Spring" and immediately afterwards, but during the last year or two. Thus Party Secretary Husak's promise not to hold trials for activities in the Dubcek period remains unsullied.

Certainly Husak is not unaware of the nature and extent of the trials which were advocated by conservative elements within the leadership--perhaps upon Soviet pressure. It is interesting to note, however, that Husak departed for the Soviet Union on extended holiday precisely at the time the trials commenced, leading one to speculate that he undertook his sojourn abroad in order to disassociate himself from the trials and thereby minimize public criticism of his leadership. Moreover, upon returning he may even seek to enhance his standing--which needs enhancing--by terminating the trials which took place during his absence, and then taking credit for mercy and understanding.

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INTELLIGENCER ANNEX

Mid-year Survey of Poland

US Ambassador Stoessel, preparing to depart soon from his post in Warsaw, has sent to Washington a final cable of random thoughts on Poland's political and economic position and US-Polish relations as of mid-1972.

Stoessel describes the domestic scene as stable and likely to remain so. Gierek, he says, has acted with great skill in consolidating his own position and eliminating rivals. The team he has put together is younger than the Gomulka group, better educated, and inclined more toward the administrative, pragmatic aspects of running a state than toward ideological preoccupations. Many, like Gierek himself, have lived in the West and are intellectually less narrow than prototype communist leaders; they travel more and are more willing to hold frank discussions on current problems with workers and peasants.

Despite a noticeable improvement in outward indicators of the economic situation, Stoessel sees Poland's economic problems as the real hooker in the regime's long term position. The Ambassador defines the basic problem in the Polish economy as the lack of some self-generating drive toward better labor productivity and efficiency to satisfy eventually increasing consumer demands in all fields. Despite platitudes toward sweeping economic reforms in the early months of Gierek's regime, he has been short on follow-through. If major reforms, to help satisfy the Poles' rising expectations, are not introduced soon, the Ambassador claims, the regime itself could be endangered by pressure that could build up over the next two or three years.

The Ambassador sees definite signs of more assertiveness in Polish foreign policy in recent months, both in shoring up relations within the socialist camp and improving ties with non-communist countries. He refers to conversations with many Polish officials who claim that Poland is the largest of Europe's socialist countries except for the USSR, that Warsaw has a role to play in European politics and will make its influence felt. Though Polish policy will certainly not run counter to the Moscow line, Stoessel emphasizes, there is a growing awareness among top officials that Polish interests are not necessarily identical with those of Moscow.

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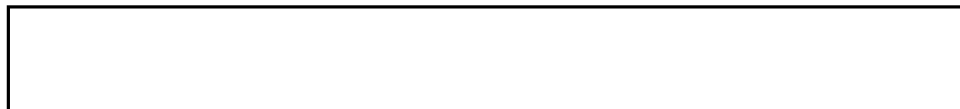


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Finally, the Ambassador describes present US policy toward Poland as basically sound. He sees it in US interest to assist the Polish leadership in its effort to modernize the country and satisfy the people's rising expectations, since stability in Poland will benefit stability in Europe as a whole.

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